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K Sheffield (J.) [1] Duke of Buckingham.

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To Doctor Tillotſon.

SIR,

NOthing in this World is, or ought to be ſo dear to any Man, as his Reputation; and conſequently the Defence of it is the greateſt Obligation that one Man can lay on another: There are alſo ſome Circumſtances, that render this Obligation yet more Acceptable and Valuable; as when 'tis Confer'd Generouſly, without any Self-Intereſt, or the leaſt Deſire or Invitation from the Perſon ſo Defended. All this happens to be my Caſe at this time; and therefore I hope you will not be ſurpriz'd to find I am not the moſt Ungrateful, and Inſenſible Man living; which certainly I ſhould be, if I did not acknowledge all your Induſtrious Concern for me, about the Buſineſs of the Eccleſiaſtical Commiſſion, which now makes ſo much Noiſe in the World. You have, as I am told, ſo Cordially pleaded my Cauſe, that 'tis almoſt become your own; and therefore, as unwilling as I am to ſpeak of my ſelf, eſpecially in a Buſineſs which I cannot wholly Excuſe; yet I think my ſelf now a little Obliged to ſhew my Part in this matter; though Imprudent enough, yet is not altogether Unworthy of ſo Juſt, and ſo Conſiderable an Advocate.

The leſs a Man ſays of himſelf, the better; and 'tis ſo well known already, why I was kept out of all the Secret Councils, that I need not juſtifie my ſelf, or trouble you as to thoſe Matters; only I Appeal to the Unqueſtionable Teſtimony of the *Spaniſh* Ambaſſador, if I did not zealouſly and conſtantly take all Occaſions to oppoſe the *French* Intereſt; becauſe I knew it directly Oppoſite both to the King and Kingdom's Good, which are indeed things Inſeperable, and ought to be ſo accounted, as a Fundamental Maxim in all Councils of Princes.

This, I hope, will prepare the way a little for what I have to ſay concerning my being one of the Eccleſiaſtical Commiſſioners; of which Error I am now as ſenſible, as I was at firſt ignorant, being ſo unhappily converſant in the midſt of a perpetual Court-flattery, as never to have heard the leaſt word of any Illegality in that Commiſſion, before I was unfortunately engaged in it.

For, thô my Lord of *Canterbury* had very prudently Refus'd to be of it, yet it was talked at Court, it proceeded only from his Unwillingneſs to act at that time, and not from any Illegality he ſuſpected in the Commiſſion; having Excuſed himſelf from it the moſt reſpectful way, by the Infirmities he lay under. Being thus ignorant of the Laws, and in ſuch a Station at Court, I need not deſire a Man of your Judgment and Candor, to conſider the hardneſs of my Caſe, when I was commanded to ſerve in a Commiſſion with a Lord Chancellor, a Lord Chief Juſtice, and two Biſhops, who had all of them already acted ſome time there, without ſhewing the leaſt Diffidence of their Power, or any Heſitation in the Execution of it. And perhaps a Man of more Diſcretion than I can pretend to, might have been eaſily perſwaded to act in ſuch a Conjunction, and to think he might do it ſafely, both in Law and Conſcience. But I need not ſay much to ſhew my deſire to have avoided, if poſſible, a troubleſome Employment, that had not the leaſt temptation of Honour or Profit to Recommend it; and which therefore I continued in upon no account in the World, but to Serve both King and Clergy with the little Ability I had, in moderating thoſe Councils, which I thought might grow higher, if I left my Place to be fill'd by any of thoſe who waited for it greedily, in order to their ill Deſigns.

And I may expect the more Credit in this, when 'tis conſider'd that the Two Important Affairs which paſſed in that Eccleſiaſtical Court, being the Biſhop of *London*'s Suſpenſion, and the Incapacitating the Members of *Magdalen* Colledge; the firſt was done ſome Months before I was a Commiſſioner, and I oppoſed the laſt, both in Voting and Speaking, and with all the Intereſt I was able to make uſe of, which indeed was but little after that Oppoſition; in which being Out-voted, I ſel-

I ſeldome Came, and never Acted in that Court after, except to Reſtore the Biſhop of *London*, thô ſent for continually, by reaſon of my Lodging ſo near it.

And ſince I have been forced to mention my Good-will at leaſt, if not my Service, to ſuch Learned Men of the Clergy who I thought deſerv'd it, it may be allow'd me to give this one Inſtance more of it; that althô in Preferring Men to all other Places of the Houſhold, I ever us'd to ask Permiſſion firſt, and accordingly was often Refus'd, for the ſake of *Roman Catholics* and others, who were Recommended by Perſons more in Favour than my ſelf; yet I was ſo careful of keeping that Conſiderable part of the Family unmix'd with Mean or Unworthy Chaplains, whom others I fear'd wou'd have impos'd on His Majeſty, that I conſtantly fill'd up thoſe Vacancies without giving him the leaſt Notice or Trouble about it, and Supply'd them with the ableſt approv'd Divines, I could poſſibly find, moſt commonly Recommended to me by the Biſhops who were not of the Court: Which I conceiv'd the moſt proper courſe, in a Matter concerning Clergymen, with a King of a different Perſwaſion from theirs, and intended for his real Service, believing it had been better for Him, as well as the Kingdom, if the Greater Eccleſiaſtical Dignities had been diſpos'd of by others with as much Caution.

And thus, *Sir*, I have endeavour'd to confirm you in your Favourable Opinion of me, which muſt be acknowledg'd by every-body an Approbation of ſuch weight, that as I hope it may be an Example of Authority to many, ſo 'tis ſufficient of itſelf to Ballance the Cenſoriouſneſs of others. I am,

SIR,

White-Hall,
Mar. 27. 1689.

Your Obliged Humble Servant,

MULGRAVE.